

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 DHA-05 ACDA-07 TRSE-00 OMB-01 /072 W
-----130337 072118Z /70

R 071536Z SEP 77
FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2374

C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 8262

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, GR
SUBJECT: MITSOTAKIS, PAPANDREOU AND OTHER DOINGS

REF: ATHENS 5624

1. CONSTANTINE MITSOTAKIS ANNOUNCED THE FORMATION OF HIS POLITICAL PARTY, THE NEW LIBERAL PARTY (NEW FILELEFTHERO KOMMA - NF), AT A PRESS CONFERENCE ON SEPTEMBER 5. THE NEW POLITICAL PARTY, WE UNDERSTAND FROM MITSOTAKIS, WILL AIM AT ATTRACTING VOTERS FROM THE GREEK CENTER WHO, IN THE LAST ELECTION, MAY HAVE VOTED FOR CARAMANLIS, FOR GEORGE MAVROS (UNION OF THE DEMOCRATIC CENTER - UDC), OR EVEN FOR ANDREAS PAPANDREOU (PASOK)

2. MITSOTAKIS HAS TOLD US THAT HE SEES HIMSELF AS OFFERING AN ALTERNATIVE TO CARAMANLIS. FROM HIS COMMENTS, AND FROM THOSE CLOSE TO HIM, IT APPEARS TO US THAT HE HAS HIS EYE NOT SO MUCH ON THE COMING ELECTIONS BUT ON THOSE THAT WILL FOLLOW WHEN CARAMANLIS ULTIMATELY, AND INEVITABLY, LEAVE THE SCENE. THUS FAR, THOUGH MITSOTAKIS HAS PROBABLY ASSURED HIMSELF OF ELECTION AS DEPUTY FROM HIS HOME DISTRICT OF HANIA, CRETE, WE HAVE NOT DETECTED ANY STRONG POPULAR NATIONAL RESONANCE FOR HIS POLITICAL EFFORTS. PALYING FOR THE LONGER GAME, HOWEVER, MITSOTAKIS

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IS PROBABLY NOT TOO CONCERNED BY HIS RELATIVELY SLOW START.

2. ANDREAS PAPANDREOU, OF COURSE, ALSO HAS HIS SIGHTS SET ON THE POST-CARAMANLIS ERA. BUT WHEREAS MITSOTAKIS' VISION OF THAT ERA INCLUDES STRONG TIES TO THE US AND THE WEST, PAPANDREOU HAS A MORE RADICAL APPROACH. THUS, IN A SEPTEMBER 3 STATEMENT TO PASOK'S CENTRAL COMMITTEE,

PAPANDREOU REJECTED ANY SORT OF UNITY WITH OTHER PARTIES IN THE COMING ELECTIONS, SAYING PASOK WOULD GO IT ALONE, REASSERTED HIS OPPOSITION TO GREECE'S MEMBERSHIP IN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY, UNDERLINED HIS HOSTILITY TO GREECE'S MILITARY TIES TO NATO AND THE UNITED STATES, AND HAD KIND WORDS ONLY FOR THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION AND THE MOST RADICAL ARAB STATES. WE SUSPECT THAT THE SORT OF LEFTISM DRAWN FROM THE RADICAL THIRD WORLD'S HANDBOOK WHICH PAPANDREOU SPILLED FORTH IS DESIGNED PRIMARILY FOR THE PARTY FAITHFUL, AND PARTICULARLY THE YOUNG. INTERESTINGLY, ONE OF THE FIRST ATTACKS ON PAPANDREOU'S SPEECH WAS MADE BY COMPOSER MIKIS THEODORAKIS WHO USED RIDICULE TO DEMOLISH PAPANDREOU'S POSITIONS.

3. LEFTISTS LIKE THEODORAKIS ARE ANGRY WITH PAPANDREOU OVER MANY THINGS -- NOT THE LEAST HIS REFUSAL TO JOIN WITH OTHER PARTIES OF THE LEFT IN SOME SORT OF ELECTORAL PACT. THE SMALLER LEFTIST PARTIES HAVE MADE SOME PROGRESS IN SEEKING TO FORM AN ELECTORAL UNION AND ANNOUNCED ON AUGUST 31 THEIR INTENTION TO WORK TOGETHER IN THE FUTURE. THE PARTIES IN THIS PACT ARE THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE INTERIOR (WHICH NOW HAS TWO MEMBERS IN PARLIAMENT); THE UNITED DEMOCRATIC LEFT (ONE DEPUTY); SOCIALIST INITIATIVE (THREE DEPUTIES WHO ARE DEFECTORS FROM THE UDC); SOCIALIST PATH (NO DEPUTIES); AND THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS (NO DEPUTIES). COOPERATION AMONG THE PARTIES WILL REPORTEDLY CONFIDENTIAL

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INCLUDE DEVELOPMENT OF A COMMON PROGRAM AND A JOINT EFFORT IN THE COMING ELECTIONS. MOST OBSERVERS BELIEVE THAT EVEN IF THESE FIVE ORGANIZATIONS WORK TOGETHER IN THE ELECTIONS THEY WILL EXPERIENCE VERY LITTLE SUCCESS AT THE POLLS, ELECTING PERHAPS ONLY THREE DEPUTIES.

4. MEANWHILE, THERE CONTINUES TO BE CONSIDERABLE SPECULATION ABOUT THE HOLDING OF EARLY ELECTIONS IN THE PRESS AND POLITICAL (ESPECIALLY OPPOSITION) CIRCLES, WITH SOME PREDICTING THAT PRIME MINISTER CARAMANLIS (WHO IS CURRENTLY IN BED WITH ANOTHER SCIATICA ATTACK) WILL CONVOKE ELECTIONS FOR LATE NOVEMBER. THE GOG HAS NOT COMMENTED DIRECTLY ON THIS MOST RECENT SPECULATION EXCEPT TO DENY THAT "PRESS REPORTS OF AN IMPENDING ELECTION HAD ANY OFFICIAL ORIGIN." IN MID-AUGUST PRIME MINISTER CARAMANLIS WAS REPORTED TO HAVE TOLD UNITED DEMOCRATIC LEFT (EDA) LEADER ILIOU THAT HE (THE PRIME MINISTER) WOULD NOT CALL SUDDEN ELECTIONS AND AND SURPRISE PEOPLE, BUT THAT, AT THE SAME TIME, HE COULD NOT BE HELD TO A SPECIFIC TIME FOR THE ELECTIONS, WHICH WOULD DEPEND ON CIRCUMSTANCES. AT THIS POINT, THE ONLY PERSON WHO KNOWS FOR SURE WHEN HE WILL CALL ELECTIONS IS CARAMANLIS--AND HE IS NOT SAYING YET.

MILLS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: VOTING, ELECTION CAMPAIGNS, POLITICAL PARTIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 07-Sep-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977ATHENS08262
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770324-0299
Format: TEL
From: ATHENS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770993/aaaadaal.tel
Line Count: 117
Litigation Code IDs:
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Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: d249034d-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 ATHENS 5624
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 31-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1371498
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MITSOTAKIS, PAPANDREOU AND OTHER DOINGS
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, GR, (MITSOTAKIS, CONSTANTINE)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/d249034d-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009